



JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

October 8, 2018

Room 544

The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources met on 8th of Oct. at 10:00AM. The meeting was held in Room 544 of the LOB. Members present were: Representatives; J. Dixon, P. McElraft, B. Steinburg, K. Hall, C. McGrady, S. Ross, P. Harrison, D. Riddell, P. Sheppard. Senators B. Jackson, B. Cook, N. Sanderson, T. Wade, A. Wells.

Rep. Jimmy Dixon presided and called the meeting to order at 10:05am

Rep. Dixon thanks everyone for being in attendance and he acknowledges our Sgt. at Arms who are working the meeting. (See attach #1 for list of names.)

Rep. Dixon calls on Chris Saunders to review the committee charge with all present and at the conclusion of Mr. Saunders remarks Rep. Dixon goes over the meeting format and outlines the speakers who will be presenting to committee.

Rep. Dixon call on Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler to update the committee on the state of Agriculture in NC after the effects of Hurricane Florence.

Commissioner Troxler describes to the committee the "catastrophic event that Hurricane Florence was to the Agriculture Industry especially in Eastern NC. It will take a herculean effort to restore the livelihood of these farmers and their farms. Four main points the Commissioner wanted to make were 1. #weeks of Harvest Time was lost and those crops salvaged due to timing of the storm. 2. Record amount of Rainfall in Eastern NC. 3. Record river flooding and 4. Duration of the storm. (lasted for days). Commissioner Troxler stated that they have been on the ground talked with farmers seen the devastation first hand. They have also talked with their Federal, Commodities and Lending Partners and they all stated that the need for big relief help from the State would be vital in recovery for farming in NC.

President Larry Wooten from NC Farm Bureau spoke and basically reiterated a lot of Commissioner Troxler's remarks. President Wooten did stated that 100% of the cotton crop, 100% of peanuts, 100% of soybean and 95% of sweet potatoes were in the field along with other remainder of couple other crops and farmers have gone now from a harvest time to a salvage time. Farm Bureau concurs with the Commissioners Figure of \$ 1.1 billion Dollar loss to crops and livestock.



Joe Reardon, Assistant Commissioner; Consumer Protection, Dept. Of Agriculture spoke and gave us update on the flooding and what the industry did to help save losses in the livestock industry prior to the storm. Mr. Reardon had a handout that coincides with his remarks and it is (labeled attach #2) in the minutes package. His remarks were praise to those in the livestock and poultry industry for their proactive work in moving animals and birds prior to the storm and saving them in the process. He also touched on recovery efforts that are taking place and how the Dept. is assisting in those efforts. (Again refer to Mr. Reardon handout).

David Smith, Chief Deputy Commissioner, Dept. Of Agriculture, updated the committee on the figures that the Dept. of Ag is asking for. He stated that most of his remarks are just a review of what all three gentleman said before him. He did state that the \$250 million dollars that the Department is asking for was a pretty solid figure in his estimation. He describe how they came upon that figure. Mr. Smith stated that they took their people, extension services etc. and estimated harvest results from the 35 counties in NC that were heavily impacted from Hurricane. FSA number of crops planted for the 2018 year. Finally figured in the quality of crops and what the loss of those crops meant in tabulating the 250 \$ million dollar figure. He then referenced the handout (Attachment 2) to break down the figures and the specific needs.

Braxton Davis, Director of Division of Coastal Management for DEQ briefed the committee on the Coastal Impact and Recovery Needs. DEQ worked closely with DOT in temporary CAMA permits to repair Bridges and roadways near or around the coast were beneficial to quick recovery on the roads and ferry system. The Dunes and greenery were helpful as they were intended to in reducing beach erosion and limiting the beachfront damage in areas where they were in certain places along our coast. We did see quite a bit of erosion near Surf City/ Topsail beach area along with pier damage. Hwy 12 on outer banks fared much better than previous storms.

Mr. Davis shared some items of interest of things that were beneficial this storm and things that could be beneficial in future these are found also in (Attachment 2).

Last Speaker Jerry Schill, Director of Government Relations, NC Fisheries Association, Mr. Schill updated the committee on the commercial fisherman and their struggle in aftermath of Hurricane Florence. The biggest issue that a lot of them are facing is lack of internet and it services which has become important to their industry. Fish Stock are displaced and due to fresh water intrusion those fish stocks move. Shellfish can't move so our Aquaculture industry was effected severely. (See Attachment #3 Mr. Schill's presentation and his request for the Relief.)

Three guest speakers spoke to the committee for the record their names were Quinn Howard, Winslow Tew, and Morris Murphy, all three were framers from eastern NC (Duplin Co.) they spoke a couple minutes each on the need for State help in the Agriculture industry to help the farmers continue to farm after Hurricane Florence.

After Question and Answers portion of the meeting in which several members directed questions to the Dep. Of Agriculture in reference to the financial aid they were asking for. It was the consensus of the committee that while they understood that the Dept. of Agriculture need some



real State help in the aftermath of the storm that to be able to consider the amount that the Department was asking for that the committee need a more in depth accounting and breakdown of how the money was to be spent and how the Dept. of Ag was going to be able to keep track of the money it allocated and received from the State. Commissioner Troxler and Staff said that would work up a proposal and get it to the members as soon as possible referencing that they had a busy couple of weeks with the NC State Fair starting on Thursday of this week. The committee agreed to revisit the amount of funding once they received the info requested from Dept. of Agriculture. The committee would then take this information to the Caucuses of each chamber to review with the members of those caucuses.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:35pm.

Representative James Dixon
Presiding

Michael Wiggins
Committee Clerk